

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-2003***

***OCTOBER 29, 2004***

***Operations and Services***

***Forensic Services, NWSPD 10-20***

***RECORDS RETENTION***

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This directive supersedes NWS Instruction 10-2003, dated November 11, 2003. Changes:

Removes Appendix A, Sample Memorandum of Understanding between the NWS and the National Climatic Data Center. This memorandum is a stand alone document and not necessary for inclusion;

Realigns the remainder of the directive into three areas: Overview, Service Product Retention, and Miscellaneous Records Retention;

Adds retention requirements for NWS products transmitted on the National Center Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System.

SIGNED

October 15, 2004

Gregory A. Mandt

Date

Director, Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services

Table of Contents Page

1. Overview.....	2
2. Service Product Retention.....	2
3. Miscellaneous Records Retention.....	2

**1. Overview.** National Weather Service (NWS) records, which may be needed at a later time for accident investigations and litigation, are retained and disposed of in accordance with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Records Disposition Handbook instructions and this directive. The National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS) performs most NWS records retention functions. Separately, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) and NWS detail the retention of NWS service products.

**2. Service Product Retention.** Service products issued by NWS offices are transmitted on the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS), National Center Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (NAWIPS), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), or Department of Defense (DOD) communication systems to an NWS Telecommunications Gateway (NWSTG) server. The products are then electronically transferred to the NCDC to meet the minimum 5-year service records retention requirement. A limited short-term records retention responsibility also resides in NWS offices. Each NWS office should be able to electronically retrieve and print hard copies of their forecast products issued within the first 14 days of issuance. Service products retained include:

a. Observations. Observation reports originated by NWS, FAA, or DOD and transmitted through the NWSTG server will be retained. These reports may include, but are not limited to, surface observations (including Automated Surface Observing System and Automated Weather Observing System reports, Marine Buoys and the Coastal Marine Area Network (C-MAN)), pilot reports, upper air reports, marine reports, and automated buoy observations.

b. Analysis and Forecast products: All official NWS routine and non-routine environmental data, analysis, and forecast products derived from NWS warning and forecast programs and transmitted through the NWSTG regardless of format (alphanumeric, graphic, or digital format).

**3. Miscellaneous Records Retention.** Miscellaneous product records commonly required in accident investigations/litigation, other documentation support activities, and related retention requirements are listed below.

a. Texts of written weather briefings, hard copy graphic records, and copies of the Daily Record of Facility Operation log or equivalent prepared by the Center Weather Service Units (CWSU): Retained for 30 days at the CWSU and from 30 days to 5 years at the CWSU or the NWS office having administrative responsibility for the unit.

b. Pilot Briefing Logs (WS Form D-10): Retained on station for a minimum of six (6) months. NOTE: The NWS does not conduct official pilot weather briefings.

c. Any fire weather forecasts, warnings, and advisories not entered into AWIPS: Retained at the originating office for five (5) years.

d. Station Duty Manual (SDM). NWS offices maintaining a SDM will retain files containing all superseded and/or canceled operational instructions for a minimum of five years from the date of cancellation. Each page of the current SDM and the historical SDM file must be dated.

e. Permanent NWS regional directive supplements and other operational instructions to NWS field offices: Retain historical file at issuing regional headquarters for a minimum of five (5) years from the date of cancellation.

f. Weather Surveillance Radar (WSR-88D) Data. Archive levels and the method of distribution to the NCDC are detailed in Part A of the Federal Meteorological Handbook (FMH) No. 11, Chapter 5, Archiving; and the NWS Observing Handbook No. 9, WSR-88D Operations, Chapter 6. NCDC is responsible for permanently archiving WSR-88D data and producing hard copy images.